

# MASSACHUSETTS BAYS PROGRAM STRATEGIC PLAN

April 2009 – June 2012

*April 1, 2009*

## OVERVIEW

### *Mission*

The Massachusetts Bays Program (MBP) is a partnership of citizens, communities, and government that strives to protect and enhance the coastal health and heritage of Massachusetts and Cape Cod Bays. To achieve our vision of a balanced and healthy environment, we:

- Provide support and assistance for local action;
- Cultivate environmental education and stewardship;
- Develop science-based initiatives to help solve management challenges; and
- Facilitate cooperation on local and region-wide projects and programs.

### *MBP Planning*

The Strategic Plan is the second level of planning for the MBP. At the first level, the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) is an all-encompassing plan addressing the management needs of Massachusetts and Cape Cod Bays. Originally produced in 1996, it was updated in 2003, and will be updated again in 2010. It provides a blueprint of 17 action plans, seven of which are designated as priorities.

At the second level, this Strategic Plan gives program direction, addressing and reflecting the strengths and limitations of staff and partners in terms of realistic capacity for implementation. Normally updated every three years, it serves as a blueprint for the implementation of the CCMP and emerging priority action areas by the MBP and its partners. The Plan articulates the means for achieving eleven strategic objectives under two overarching goals:

#### Goal A: Producing significant environmental results in the MBP region

- Objective A1: Protect and enhance coastal habitat
- Objective A2: Reduce and prevent stormwater pollution
- Objective A3: Protect and enhance shellfish resources
- Objective A4: Manage local land use and growth
- Objective A5: Manage municipal wastewater
- Objective A6: Manage marine invasive species
- Objective A7: Monitor marine waters
- Objective A8: Adapt for projected impacts of climate change

#### Goal B: Building organizational effectiveness

- Objective B1: Strengthen the identity and influence of the MBP
- Objective B2: Identify and pursue alternative funding
- Objective B3: Ensure effectiveness of MBP structure for managing implementation

The Annual Workplan is the third layer of planning, which identifies the timeframes, responsible parties, and specific steps for MBP staff and Regional Service Providers to complete program actions within each fiscal year. Its development is guided heavily by the programmatic intentions articulated in the Strategic Plan.

*Goal A: Produce significant environmental results in the MBP region*

**Objective A1: Protect and enhance coastal habitat**

*Outcomes*

- Short-term: Data and information are available to inform and motivate communities to act with regard to coastal habitat policy requirements and best practices
- Intermediate: Habitat quality and extent is known, effort is being made to restore and protect habitat, data are available to determine effectiveness
- Long term: Healthy, diverse, and representative coastal habitats and species exist and are protected

*Actions* (Actions are directed *primarily* towards the following priority habitats: salt marsh, diadromous fish runs, and eelgrass beds)

- A1a) Assess and prioritize community needs with regard to coastal habitat policy and management
- A1b) Assist communities in identifying and acquiring additional resources related to priority coastal habitat restoration and protection
- A1c) Provide technical assistance to communities and encourage adoption of best management practices related to priority coastal habitat restoration and protection
- A1d) Promote local coastal land restoration by continuing to expand the role of volunteers and local officials in assessing and monitoring priority coastal habitats
- A1e) Investigate, monitor, and limit habitat degradation
- A1f) Continue research for the development of habitat assessment methods, including *non-priority* coastal habitats
- A1g) Support development and implementation of specially-designated area management plans
- A1h) Coordinate on and/or participate in state and regional habitat initiatives

*Indicators*

- Number of coastal habitat restoration/protection efforts initiated or completed
- Acreage of restored and/or protected coastal wetlands
- Acreage of restored and/or protected eelgrass habitat
- Miles of fish runs restored and/or protected
- Quantity of anadromous fish utilizing fish runs
- Fisheries recovered as indicated by DMF lifting bans or catch limits
- Number of volunteer hours contributed
- Number of habitat datasets loaded into MORIS

*Goal A: Produce significant environmental results in the MBP region*

**Objective A2: Reduce and prevent stormwater pollution**

*Outcomes*

- Short-term: Data and information are available to inform and motivate communities to act with regard to stormwater policy requirements and best practices
- Intermediate: Impacts from stormwater pollution are minimized and monitoring data are available to determine effectiveness of actions
- Long term: Water bodies support designated human uses and provide suitable habitat for aquatic life and wildlife

*Actions*

- A2a) Assess and prioritize community needs with regard to NPDES Phase II implementation
- A2b) Assist communities in identifying and acquiring additional resources related to NPDES Phase II implementation
- A2c) Provide technical assistance to communities, and support adoption of best management practices related to stormwater management
- A2d) Facilitate development of local stormwater funding mechanisms
- A2e) Identify and respond to outreach needs related to stormwater management
- A2f) Promote and expand the role of volunteers and local officials in monitoring stormwater and receiving water quality and identifying sources of non-point source pollutants
- A2g) Support DEP/CZM efforts to revise and update the stormwater policy as needed
- A2h) Seek grants to fund environmental analyses and projects related to non-point source pollution

*Indicators*

- Number of stormwater mitigations projects initiated or completed
- Number of bathing beach closures
- Acreage of shellfish beds with upgraded status
- Acreage of receiving water bodies with upgraded status
- Number of communities in compliance with NPDES Phase II requirements
- The number of efforts contributing to TMDL implementation

*Goal A: Produce significant environmental results in the MBP region*

**Objective A3: Protect and enhance shellfish resources**

*Outcomes*

- Short-term: Data and information are available to inform and motivate communities to act with regard to shellfish policy requirements and best practices
- Intermediate: Shellfish habitat quality and extent are known; pollution is mitigated, and monitoring data are available to determine effectiveness
- Long term: Shellfish are safe for human consumption; sustainable aquaculture operations are supported

*Actions*

- A3a) Assess and prioritize community needs with regard to shellfish policy and management
- A3b) Assist communities in identifying and acquiring additional resources related to shellfish bed management
- A3c) Provide technical assistance to communities and encourage adoption of best management practices related to shellfish bed restoration and protection

*Indicators*

- Number of shellfish bed restoration projects initiated or completed
- Acreage of shellfish beds with upgraded status

*Goal A: Produce significant environmental results in the MBP region*

**Objective A4: Manage local land use and growth**

*Outcomes*

- Short-term: Data, information, and planning tools are available to inform and motivate communities to act with regard to land use policy requirements and best practices that protect coastal and water resources
- Intermediate: Appropriate local land use policies and plans are in place
- Long term: Land use has little or no adverse impact on water quality and the health of coastal habitats

*Actions*

- A4a) Assess and prioritize community needs with regard to land use and growth management
- A4b) Assist communities in identifying and acquiring additional resources related to land use and growth policies and planning
- A4c) Provide technical assistance to communities related to local land use policies and planning, particularly LID
- A4d) Support existing municipal planning and conservation networks and expand as needed
- A4e) Support development and implementation of current and proposed state regulations that support development practices that protect sensitive resource areas

*Indicators*

- Number of communities with protective local land use policies that are developed and/or implemented
- Changes in land use patterns
- Extent of impervious surface
- Extent of armored coastline
- Extent of area protected from development
- Number of communities with high Commonwealth Capital scores
- Number of communities with approved Coastal Hazard Mitigation Plans
- Number of water bodies meeting designated uses or upgraded to higher quality

*Goal A: Produce significant environmental results in the MBP region*

**Objective A5: Manage wastewater**

*Outcomes*

- Short-term: Data and information are available to inform and motivate communities to act with regard to wastewater policy requirements and best practices
- Intermediate: Wastewater discharge requirements are met
- Long term: Water bodies support designated human uses and provide suitable habitat for fish, other aquatic life, and wildlife

*Actions*

- A5a) Assess and prioritize community needs with regard to wastewater management
- A5b) Provide technical assistance to develop and implement wastewater management plans, including sewerage efforts aimed at managing contaminant and nutrient loading to local embayments
- A5c) Assist communities in identifying and acquiring additional resources related to mitigating wastewater impacts to local embayments
- A5d) Support the control of combined sewer overflows and illicit septic discharges into coastal waters
- A5e) Participate in the development and implementation of TMDLs
- A5f) Complete designation and implementation of No Discharge Areas
- A5g) Track implementation of MWRA activities

*Indicators*

- Number of wastewater management plans initiated or completed
- Number of bathing beach closures
- Acreage of shellfish beds with upgraded status
- Acreage of receiving water bodies with upgraded status
- Number of permit violations
- Number of efforts contributing to TMDL development
- Extent of MBP area covered by federally designated No Discharge Areas

*Goal A: Produce significant environmental results in the MBP region*

**Objective A6: Manage marine invasive species**

*Outcomes*

- Short-term: Data and information are available to inform decision-making
- Intermediate: Measures are taken to minimize the introduction and spread of marine invasive species
- Long term: Impacts of marine invasive species are minimized

*Actions*

- A6a) Conduct rapid assessments for the presence of invasive species in coastal resource areas
- A6b) Continue to update the state aquatic invasive species (AIS) strategy
- A6c) Participate on regional panels related to marine invasive species
- A6d) Educate public to minimize the impacts of marine invasive species
- A6e) Implement monitoring protocols with volunteers

*Indicators*

- Number of volunteers and volunteer hours contributed
- Number of partner organizations involved
- Number of sites monitored for marine invasive species
- Number of invasive species present
- Number of new invasive species
- Spatial distribution of invasive species

*Goal A: Produce significant environmental results in the MBP region*

**Objective A7: Monitor marine waters**

*Outcomes*

- Short-term: Data and information are available to inform monitoring and decision-making
- Intermediate: Data are used to inform decision-making
- Long term: Quality of coastal waters improves

*Actions*

- A7a) Develop and implement annual Marine Monitoring Plan
- A7b) Synthesize ongoing monitoring efforts within Mass Bays
- A7c) Provide information gathered in monitoring efforts to constituents and the general public
- A7d) Provide targeted technical assistance for monitoring of specific embayments
- A7e) Explore linking public health with environmental indicators/quality including emerging toxins, pharmaceuticals, and personal care products
- A7f) Conduct local and regional water quality monitoring efforts
- A7g) Support local and regional water quality monitoring efforts
- A7h) Support monitoring programs that support TMDLs

*Indicators*

- Number and diversity of monitoring projects and studies that the program is engaged in
- Number of MBP embayments where monitoring is taking place
- Number of parameters monitored
- Number of other programs using data for decision-making



*Goal A: Produce significant environmental results in the MBP region*

**Objective A8: Adapt for projected impacts of climate change**

*Outcomes*

- Short-term: Data about impacts and information are available to inform and motivate communities to act with regard to climate change adaptation
- Intermediate: Measures are taken to prepare and protect coastal resources from the impacts of climate change
- Long term: Climate-driven impacts to the coastal environment are minimized

*Actions*

- A8a) Convene a Climate Advisory Group to inform the development of a specific plan of action
- A8b) Assess and summarize the climate-driven vulnerability of and projected impacts to the MBP region, including threats to natural, built, and social resources
- A8c) Develop models and strategies to set priorities for MBP communities
- A8d) Develop and implement a strategy to fill outreach and communications needs related to climate change adaptation
- A8e) Assess and prioritize community needs with regard to climate change adaptation
- A8f) Develop and implement a strategy to fill outreach and communications needs related to climate change adaptation
- A8g) Assist communities in identifying and acquiring additional resources related to climate change adaptation
- A8h) Provide technical assistance to communities related to local climate change adaptation planning and implementation
- A8i) Gather, analyze, and share existing tools and resources with constituents
- A8j) Update MBP policy and planning documents to consider the impacts of climate change
- A8k) Develop or participate in the development of a plan to monitor climate-driven impacts to the coastal environment
- A8l) Participate in state and regional climate change policy and planning networks

*Indicators*

- Number of communities that have initiated and/or completed climate change adaptation plans
- Completion of CCMP upgrade to incorporate climate change adaptations
- Number of conferences and/or outreach events where MBP is represented

*Goal B: Build organizational effectiveness for the Massachusetts Bays Program*

**Objective B1: Strengthen the identity and influence of the MBP**

*Outcomes*

- Short-term: Organizational identity products are shared with constituents
- Intermediate: The Program has a presence in all of the communities of the MBP region
- Long term: MBP is an effective, credible, and respected partner

*Actions*

- B1a) Develop and implement an annual communications plan
- B1b) Report widely on program efforts and achievements
- B1c) Conduct a stakeholder analysis to define current key players, interests, and capacities
- B1d) Regularly assess constituent perceptions of the MBP, its needs, and interests
- B1e) Ensure that staff have the resources and opportunity to improve technical skills to effectively address program priorities
- B1f) Implement a tracking and reporting system to capture scope and extent of program effectiveness
- B1g) Develop meaningful indicators of the quality and extent of constituent engagement
- B1h) Recognize contributions of constituents and partners

*Indicators*

- Extent of utilization of MBP's online resources
- Number of volunteers and volunteer hours contributing to MBP projects
- Number of MBP appearances in external media
- Number and type of projects in which MBP is involved
- Number, type, and role of MBP partners
- Number and type of services provided by MBP to communities
- Satisfaction of constituent communities with MBP engagement, products, and services

*Goal B: Build organizational effectiveness for the Massachusetts Bays Program*

**Objective B2: Identify and pursue alternative funding**

*Outcomes*

- Short-term: Funding priorities and potential funding sources and partners are identified
- Intermediate: Funds are sought to carry out project implementation
- Long term: MBP is sufficiently funded to implement its work

*Actions*

B2a) Complete MBP Finance Plan

B2b) Identify and pursue sources of funding for region-specific and program-wide initiatives

*Indicators*

- Number of proposals submitted
- Amount of funding leveraged
- Number of projects benefitting from leveraged funding
- Diversity of funding sources
- Satisfaction of funders

*Goal B: Build organizational effectiveness for the Massachusetts Bays Program*

**Objective B3: Ensure effectiveness of MBP structure for managing implementation**

*Outcomes*

- Short-term: Measures are taken to clarify roles and responsibilities of MBP staff, committees, and partners
- Intermediate: Management Committee and any relevant sub-groups are engaged in program planning and implementation
- Long term: MBP is effective in meeting the objectives of its CCMP and is adequately represented by constituents and partners

*Actions*

- B3a) Evaluate and articulate roles and responsibilities of program staff and partners
- B3b) Review composition of Management Committee to ensure representation of communities and partners, and to reaffirm commitment to program planning and implementation
- B3c) Develop additional sub-committees necessary for meeting the goals articulated in the CCMP and Strategic Plan

*Indicators*

- Attendance at meetings of the Management Committee and any sub-groups
- Roles and responsibilities document updated